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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8903

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY ANKARA

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 04 PARIS 07990

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, UR, FR

SUBJECT: FRENCH CONSULTATIONS IN MOSCOW

REF: (A) PARIS 7724, (B) PARIS 6680

1. SUMMARY: QUAI INTERPRETS WARM RECEPTION SECGEN DE COURCEL RECEIVED IN MOSCOW AS SIGNAL THAT ROAD HAS BEEN REOPENED TO "EXTENDING AND DEEPENING" FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS, IF FRENCH SO DESIRE. FRENCH, FOR THEIR PART, STRESSED THAT THEY VIEWED DIFFICULTIES RECENTLY ENCOUNTERED BY DETENTE AS NORMAL, BUT CLEARLY WARNED SOVIETS THAT FAILURE TO OBSERVE MODERATION COULD PUT DETENTE IN JEOPARDY. OTHER MAJOR SUBJECTS WERE DISARM-AMMENT, WHICH SOVIETS PUSHED HARD, BUT WITH SOMEWHAT GREATER SENSITIVITY TO FRENCH VIEWS THAN IN PAST; CSCE; THE MIDDLE EAST; AND AFRICA, PARTICULARLY DJIBOUTI, THE SAHARA AND ANGOLA. FRENCH PARTICULARLY URGED SOVIETS TO EXERCISE RESTRAINT IN EACH OF THE LAST THREE CONTEXTS. VISIT PRODUCED AGREEMENT ON GROMYKO TRIP TO FRANCE IN APRIL OR MAY. QUESTION OF BREZHNEV VISIT WAS DEFERRED TILL THEN. ON WHOLE, QUAI DESCRIBES CONVERSATIONS AS "VERY USEFUL." ONLY SLIGHTLY SOUR NOTE WAS STRUCK ON BERLIN'S TIES TO THE FRG, WHICH SOVS CHARACTERIZED WITH "UNUSUAL HARSHNESS." END SUMMARY.

2. QUAI DIRECTOR SOVIET AND EASTERN EUROPEAN AFFAIRS OMNES, WHO ACCOMPANIED SECGEN DE COURCEL ON RECENT FRENCH-SOVIET CONSULTATIONS IN MOSCOW (REFTELS) SAYS FRENCH WERE IMPRESSED BY MARKED SOVIET EFFORTS TO OFFER WARM RECEPTION. QUAI ATTRIBUTES THIS TO SOVIET DESIRE GIVE FRENCH RELATIONS NEW ELAN, AS WELL AS TO ESTEEM IN WHICH DE COURCEL IS PERSONALLY HELD IN MOSCOW AS THE SENIOR ADVISOR TO DE GAULLE WHO SUPPORTED IDEA OF CONFIDENTIAL

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DETENTE. AS A RESULT OF SOVIET VICE FONMIN KOVALEV'S ILLNESS DE COURCEL'S COUNTERPART WAS FIRST VICE FONMIN KUZNETSOV, A CHANGE IN CASTING FRENCH WELCOMED SINCE KUZNETSOV'S COMPETENCE IS WORLD-WIDE.

3. FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS:

FROM BILATERAL VIEWPOINT HIGH POINT OF VISIT WAS

DE COURCEL'S PARTICULARLY CORDIAL RECEPTION BY GROMYKO. CONVERSATION DID NOT TOUCH ON DETAILS AND WAS LARGELY PERSONAL. HOWEVER, GROMYKO FOCUSSED ON FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS IN GENERAL TERMS, STRESSING THAT ROAD WAS OPEN TO EXTENDING AND FURTHER DEEPENING FRENCH-SOVIET RELATIONS IF FRENCH DESIRE.

4. OMNES SAYS QUAI INTERPRETS THIS AS CLEAR AND IMPORTANT SIGNAL, PARTICULARLY IN CONTEXT OF SPECIAL CORDIALITY BREZHNEV ALSO HAD RESERVED FOR FRANCE AT PARTY CONGRESS. FOR FRENCH SIDE OMNES THOUGHT IT WILL REQUIRE DECISION AS TO PRECISE EXTENT TO WHICH GOF WOULD, UNDER PRESENT CONDITIONS, WISH TO RECIPROCATATE. SPECULATING ABOUT REASONS FOR THIS SOVIET MOVE, OMNES REITERATED THAT SOVS IN FIRST INSTANCE DESIRED TO ERASE IMPRESSIONS GISCARD'S VISIT. MORE IMPORTANTLY, SOVS MAY BE TRYING TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH FRENCH IN

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COUNTERPOINT TO THEIR CURRENT PROBLEMS WITH THE US.
QUAI ALSO SPECULATES THAT SOVIET TROUBLES WITH THE
FRENCH CP MAY NOW NO LONGER OBLIGE THEM TO BE QUITE AS
SOLICITOUS ABOUT ITS INTERESTS.

5. FOUR MAJOR SUBSTANTIVE SUBJECTS TOOK UP MOST OF TWO
LONG SESSIONS BETWEEN KUTZNETSOV AND DE COURCEL: DETENTE,
DISARMAMENT, THE MIDDLE EAST AND AFRICA.

6. DETENTE:

FRENCH RAISED ISSUE OF DETENTE, ON GROUNDS THAT,
PRECISELY BECAUSE THEY ARE LESS CLOSELY IDENTIFIED THAN
OTHERS IN WEST WITH US AND FRG, THEIR VIEWS ON THIS
CENTRAL ISSUE MIGHT THEREFORE HAVE SPECIAL WEIGHT IN
MOSCOW. DE COURCEL OPENED BY REITERATING IMPORTANCE
FRANCE CONTINUES TO ATTACH TO DETENTE, IN SPITE OF
RECENT "DIFFICULTIES." WHILE THESE ARE SERIOUS HE ARGUED
THAT THEY ARE ALSO NORMAL, SINCE DETENTE NOT NECESSARILY
END OF ALL CONTENTION. ON OTHER HAND DE COURCEL SAID
VERY CLEARLY THAT THERE IS NEVERTHELESS NOW A SERIOUS
DANGER THAT DETENTE MAY COME TO AN END IF USSR DOES NOT

EXERCISE A CERTAIN MODERATION OR FAILS TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE IMPORTANT INTERESTS OF OTHERS. SOVIETS LISTENED AND REPORTEDLY MADE NO SPECIFIC RESPONSE, ALTHOUGH KUZNETSOV REITERATED THAT DETENTE REMAINS ESSENTIAL POINT BREZHNEV'S POLICY. QUAI FEELS KREMLIN CLEARLY GOT THE MESSAGE.

7. CSCE:

TO FRENCH SURPRISE SOVS WERE VERY CAUTIOUS ON CSCE, PRESSING NEITHER FOR BILATERAL CONSULTATIONS BEFORE THE BELGRADE REVIEW MEETING, NOR FOR START OF CONFIDENTIAL

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MULTILATERAL CONSULTATIONS. FRENCH, FOR THEIR PART AGAIN STRESSED NEED FOR GREATER RECIPROCITY IN SPECIFIC AREAS, SUCH AS WORKING CONDITIONS FOR JOURNALISTS, BUSINESSMEN AND EXCHANGE EXPERTS. SOVS DUCKED IDEA OF NEW BILATERAL UNDERSTANDING ON THESE POINTS, BUT IMPLIED THEY INTENDED TAKE UNILATERAL STEPS IN DIRECTION FRENCH DESIRED.

8. SOVIETS, FOR THEIR PART SUGGESTED THAT BREZHNEV'S PROPOSAL FOR A "EUROPEAN TRANSPORT, ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONFERENCE" SHOULD BE SEEN AS PART OF SOVIET EFFORT TO IMPLEMENT CSCE BASKET II AND ASKED FRENCH HELP PROMOTE THIS IDEA. DE COURCEL AVOIDED COMMITMENT BY SUGGESTING MATTER BE FIRST DEALT WITH IN ECE. SOVS SIMILARLY RAISED PROPOSED CEMA-COMMUNITY ACCORD IN CONTEXT BASKET II. FRENCH ONLY SAID THIS ISSUE STILL BEING STUDIED BY COMMISSION, IN LINE WITH A COMMUNITY DECISION NOT TO COMMENT ON THIS QUESTION BEFORE COMMISSION HAD FINISHED WORK.

9. DISARMAMENT:

OMNES SAID DISARMAMENT WAS SUBJECT OF AN UNUSUALLY LONG SESSION IN WHICH SOVIETS RAISED FULL RANGE OF PET PROJECTS, BUT EXERCISED SOMEWHAT GREATER SENSITIVITY TO FRENCH VIEWS THAN HAD BEEN CUSTOMARY IN THE PAST. FOLLOWING IS LIST OF THEMES RAISED WITH FRENCH RESPONSES:

A) GENERAL AND COMPLETE DISARMAMENT: SOVIETS CONTINUE TO SUPPORT, ARE PREPARED TO CONSIDER APPROPRIATE UNSPECIFIED CONTROLS AND WANT TO CONSULT WITH INTERESTED COUNTRIES, INCLUDING FRANCE. FRENCH LISTENED, SUGGESTED SUBJECT MAY BE PREMATURE.

B) NON-USE OF FORCE: SOVIETS ALSO REITERATED IMPORTANCE THEY ATTACH THIS IDEA AND PROPOSED TO "CONSULT"

WITH FRENCH. DE COURCEL EXPLAINED FRANCE RECENTLY
ABSTAINED IN UN ON THIS POINT ON GROUNDS IT SAW LITTLE
CHANCE OF SUCCESS UNTIL ALL FIVE NUCLEAR POWERS SUPPORT
PROJECT. WHILE GOOD IN PRINCIPLE, PROPOSAL THEREFORE
ALSO PREMATURE.
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C) ELIMINATION OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION: FRENCH
SAID THIS TOO SEEMED GOOD IN THEORY, BUT ASKED WHAT
WEAPONS KUZNETSOV HAD IN MIND. LATTER SAID POINT WOULD
BE EXPLAINED TO CCD IN GENEVA. FRENCH GAINED TIME BY
SAYING THAT THEY WOULD THEN AWAIT WORD FROM THERE.

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D) WORLD DISARMAMENT CONFERENCE: SOVIETS COMPLAINED
US AND CHINA DRAGGING HEELS. FRENCH SAID THEY FAVOR
THIS IDEA IN PRINCIPLE, BUT FEAR IT TOO IS USELESS UNTIL
ALL NUCLEAR POWERS PARTICIPATE.

E) SALT: SOVIETS SAID THEY CONTINUE TO HOPE FOR AN
AGREEMENT, BUT DID NOT ENTER INTO ANY DETAILS ON CURRENT
NEGOTIATING PROBLEMS. NO EFFORT WAS MADE TO PUT BLAME
ON U.S. MOREOVER, FRENCH WERE STRUCK BY FACT THAT,
CONTRARY SOME PRESS SPECULATION, SOVS DID NOT RAISE IDEA
OF ASSOCIATING OTHER NUCLEAR POWERS (THAT IS FRANCE AND
BRITAIN) WITH SALT NEGOTIATIONS PROCESS WHICH WAS MEN-
TIONED IN BREZHNEV'S PARTY CONGRESS SPEECH.

F) MBFR: ON OTHER HAND KUZNETSOV WAS MORE SEVERE IN
DEALING WITH MBFR, SPECIFICALLY HOLDING WEST RESPONSIBLE
IF THINGS DID NOT PROGRESS. QUAI DETECTED NOTHING NEW
IN OTHER ASPECTS SOVIET TREATMENT THIS SUBJECT, BUT WERE
STRUCK BY FACT THAT SOVS MADE NO EFFORT URGE FRENCH TO
JOIN VIENNA TALKS AS THEY HAD DONE IN PAST.

G) NON-PROLIFERATION: SOVS PRAISED FRENCH CONTRIBUTIONS TO NEGOTIATIONS WHICH LEAD TO LONDON ACCORD, STRESSED IMPORTANCE USSR ATTACHES TO PREVENTING FURTHER PROLIFERATION, AND MADE PLAIN THAT FRANCE HAD "SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY" TO CONTRIBUTE TO "CONTINUATION" OF PROCESS STARTED BY LONDON ACCORD.

H) PROHIBITION OF CHEMICAL WEAPONS AND NON-USE OF THE ENVIRONMENT FOR MILITARY PURPOSES: OMNES SAID FRENCH LISTENED TO EXPOSE STANDARD SOVIET POSITIONS THESE THEMES WITH "OPEN ATTITUDE." WHEN SOVS SUGGESTED UN SECURITY COUNCIL BE USED TO IMPOSE "SANCTIONS" FRENCH CONFIDENTIAL

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DEMURRED, POINTING OUT THEY PREFERRED USE DOMESTIC LEGISLATION, AS HAD BEEN CASE FRENCH LEGISLATION PROHIBITING BIOLOGICAL WEAPONS. FRENCH DID NOT COMMIT THEMSELVES TO CONTINUE DISCUSS THIS THEME.

I) CCD: LASTLY, QUAJ WAS INTRIGUED BY KUZNETSOV'S FAILURE SUGGEST FRENCH JOIN CCD, A THEME SOVS HAD APPARENTLY STRUCK REPEATEDLY IN PAST WITHOUT SUCCESS.

10. OMNES SUMMED UP UNUSUALLY LONG TREATMENT OF DISARMAMENT AS REFLECTING GREAT IMPORTANCE SOVS EVIDENTLY ATTACH TO OBTAINING GREATER FRENCH SUPPORT SOVIET PROPOSALS. WHILE KUZNETSOV DID NOT INSIST ON FRENCH COMMITMENTS ON SPECIFIC POINTS, QUAJ EXPECTS THIS WAS ONLY PRELUDE FOR RENEWED AND GREATER EFFORT ON DISARMAMENT THEME BY GROMYKO AND EVENTUALLY BY BREZHNEV HIMSELF.

11. MIDDLE EAST:

OMNES SAYS DE COURCEL TRIED HARD TO FIND OUT IF SOVIETS INTENDED LAUNCH ANY NEW INITIATIVES IN MIDDLE EAST. KUZNETSOV SAID NO SUCH EFFORT WAS IN WORKS FOR TIME BEING, SINCE ISRAEL WAS BLOCKING GENEVA CONFERENCE AND NO INITIATIVE SEEMED PROMISING IN UN. KUZNETSOV CLAIMED HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT, IF ANYTHING, US MAY HAVE IN MIND TO MOVE SITUATION FORWARD AT THIS STAGE. HE DESCRIBED SOV RELATIONS WITH LEBANON AS RESERVED, AND BADLY INFORMED; WITH SYRIA AS GOOD, WITH IRAQ AS DEVELOPING AND WITH JORDAN AS EVOLVING. INTERESTINGLY, QUAJ IS CONVINCED KUTZNETSOV HAD NO INKLING OF SADAT'S INTENTION DENOUNCE HIS USSR FRIENDSHIP TREATY, SINCE KUZNETSOV SPECIFICALLY MENTIONED FRIENDSHIP TREATY AS BASIS FOR EVENTUAL NEW IMPROVEMENT SOVIET-EGYPTIAN RELATIONS.

12. AFRICA:

DE COURCEL THEN RAISED LAST MAJOR SUBJECT, AFRICA,
DRAWING PARTICULAR ATTENTION TO THE SITUATIONS RELATING
TO DJIBOUTI, THE WESTERN SAHARA, AND ANGOLA.

13. ON DJIBOUTI DECOURCEL RECITED FRENCH FEARS THAT ITS
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NEIGHBORS MAY NOT INTEND TO RESPECT ITS INDEPENDENCE
AFTER FRENCH LEAVE. SINCE USSR IS MAJOR SUPPLIER OF
ARMS TO SOMALIA, FRENCH EXPECT REPEAT EXPECT USSR TO
EXERCISE AND COUNSEL MODERATION IN THIS AREA.

14. ON WESTERN SAHARA FRENCH ARGUED SIMILARLY THAT THEY
HAD NOT TAKEN SIDES BETWEEN ALGERIA AND MOROCCO AND FELT
IT WAS "THE DUTY" OF THE USSR TO EXERCISE SIMILAR
RESTRAINT.

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R 172001Z MAR 76

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15. LASTLY, FRENCH TURNED TO ANGOLA. DE COURCEL REPORTEDLY SAID FRANCE HAD NOTED SITUATION WHICH HAD BEEN CREATED IN ANGOLA. IT HAD RECOGNIZED ANGOLA. PROBLEM NOW WAS TO GIVE ANGOLA POSSIBILITY OF BECOMING REALLY INDEPENDENT. FRENCH SAID THEY SUPPORTED RETREAT OF SOUTH AFRICANS. HOWEVER THEY ALSO SUPPORTED AND "EXPECTED" THE RETREAT OF ALL OTHER FOREIGN FORCES, SUCH AS CUBANS. OMNES STRESSED FORCEFULNESS AND CLARITY WITH WHICH DE COURCEL MADE THIS POINT.

16. SOVIETS TOOK NOTE OF FRENCH VIEWS ON DJIBOUTI AND SAHARA WITHOUT MAJOR ARGUMENT. HOWEVER OMNES SAYS KUZNETSOV WAS "VERY RESERVED" ON ANGOLA, ARGUING THAT SOUTH AFRICANS AND CUBANS CANNOT BE PUT ON SAME PLANE SINCE LATTER WERE HELPING LIBERATION MOVEMENT. NEVERTHELESS, OMNES SAID, FRENCH SIDE MADE IT UNMISTAKABLY CLEAR THAT THESE WERE AREA IN WHICH SOVIET DEEDS WOULD HAVE TO MATCH WORDS IF DETENTE WAS NOT TO BE IMPERILED.

17. BERLIN:

LASTLY OMNES SAID FRENCH LEFT WITH DISTINCTLY UNCOMFORTABLE IMPRESSION ABOUT SOVIET REFERENCES TO BERLIN. KUTZNETSOV COMPLAINED IN HARSHER TERMS THAN FRENCH HAVE HEARD SOVS USE FOR CONSIDERABLE TIME, THAT FRG WAS EXTENDING ITS BERLIN TIES IN WAYS "ABUSIVE OF QUADRIpartite AGREEMENTS." FRENCH REPLIED ALLIES HAD IN NO WAY RELAXED THEIR CONTROLS OVER IMPLEMENTATION THIS ACCORD AND WERE NOT AWARE SUCH ABUSES. EVEN SO OMNES SAYS FRENCH LEFT WITH IMPRESSION THAT SOVIETS WERE IN FACT AFRAID OF INCREASING INFLUENCE OF CDU/CSU GOVERNMENT IN BONN AND WERE SIGNALING THEIR IRRITATION AND CONCERNS IN ADOPTING HARSHER TONES ON THE NEURALGIC
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ISSUE OF BERLIN.

18. GROMYKO VISIT:

GROMYKO'S VISIT TO FRANCE WAS AGREED TO FOR APRIL OR MAY. THE QUESTION OF BREZHNEV'S VISIT WAS DEFERRED TILL THEN.

19. COMMENT: THE CENTRAL POINT WHICH EMERGES FROM THIS LONG ACCOUNT IS THAT DE COURCEL SKILLFULLY USED MOSCOW TRIP TO WARN SOVIETS CLEARLY OF POSSIBLE CONSEQUENCES FOR DETENTE OF RENEWED ADVENTURISM, PARTICULARLY IN AFRICA. AT SAME TIME FRENCH MADE PROGRESS IN RESTORING THEIR BILATERAL RELATIONS WITHOUT COMMITTING THEMSELVES AS YET AS TO PRECISE TONE THESE IMPROVED RELATIONS SHOULD TAKE. THIS SHOULD PROVIDE THEM WITH A MODEST LEVERAGE IN THE MONTHS AHEAD, WHICH MAY ALSO BE INDIRECTLY USEFUL IN FURTHER ADVANCING OBJECTIVES GOF SHARES WITH THE U.S.
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